



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

BOOK REVIEW

The Social Evolution of Religion. By GEORGE WILLIS COOKE. Boston, Stratford Co., 1920. 416 p.

"The Social Evolution of Religion" is a book remarkable for its broad scope and its impartial treatment of the religious life of mankind as one of the phenomena of group activity. The author demonstrates that he is thoroughly at home in the fields of both comparative religion and social theory. He handles the various explanations of primitive religious manifestations such as totemism, animism, the mana concept, animal worship, etc., with ease and intelligent grasp of his subject, and turns with equal penetration to a discussion of the mother goddess cults and nature worship or to Buddhism and Christianity.

When Mr. Cooke turns to topics less definitely related to religious problems, his footing is less secure. Because he follows Durkheim in considering that religion is a product of the social mind, he feels it necessary to devote an introductory chapter to "The Social Transmission of Human Experiences," and another to "The Creative Genius of Social Man." In these sections, he makes some rather startling statements. For instance, he insists that Galton and the other Eugenists are entirely at fault, and that the environment in which the individual mind is situated is even more influential than the hereditary equipment of the mind. Indeed, he goes so far as to say that the eugenic theories and the theory of the superman are in the same class. Had he been a psychoanalyst, he would doubtless have considered both theories a flight from reality.

When Mr. Cooke states his position in less extreme terms, and merely points out that congenital and social heredity are so intimately associated with each other that they are often inseparable, he is, of course, entirely beyond criticism. The work of Watson (*Psychology from the Standpoint of a Behaviorist*) and of Kempf (*The Tonus of the Autonomic Segments as Causes of Abnormal Behavior, J. Nerv. & Ment. Diseases, 1920*) has indicated this same conclusion from studies of the social conditionings of the emotional reactions. Since it has been demonstrated that instinctive and emotional activities can be modified almost infinitely by the social milieu, Mr. Cooke is quite justified in attributing a great deal of significance to the social inheritance in the molding of the biological endowment of the individual.

The most interesting chapters in the book are those already referred to concerning primitive rituals and beliefs, and the concluding chapters on "Universal Religion" and "Religion as a Cosmic and Human Motive." In these last two sections, the modern attitude of scientific inquiry, which does not even shrink from close scrutiny of its gods, is commented upon, and the results of its study summarized. The chief criticism of Christianity is the fact that in our modern economic and social system it may be professed but is seldom practiced. The religion of the future must find some way to bridge this gap between theory and application.

PHYLLIS BLANCHARD.